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SUBJECT: CFE/JCG: JUNE 10, 2008 PLENARY AND RELATED MEETINGS

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¶1. (SBU) Summary. During the June 10 JCG Plenary under Kazakh Chairmanship, Belgium briefly described its ratification procedures noting the process would take 6-12 months. Then Azerbaijan and Armenia exchanged a series of interventions in which Armenia did not answer direct questions posed by Azerbaijan regarding lack of transparency on units in Nagorno-Karabakh. Russian Chief Arms Control Delegate Ulyanov did not attend for the second week in a row as he was reportedly tied up with preparations for the Joint FSC-PC meetings regarding Abkhazia. Germany presented a read out of the Pugwash Conference at the June 9 JCG-T and alerted Allies that Russia would likely continue to push for JCG discussion on substantial combat forces, accession and ceilings. The Treaty Operation and Implementation (TOI) small group met on June 12 to agree on a new chair; Russia mentioned it may propose suspension of the JCG working groups. End Summary

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JCG PLENARY - AZERBAIJAN ASKS ARMENIA POINTED QUESTIONS  
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¶2. (SBU) At the June 10 JCG Plenary chaired by Kazakhstan, Belgium (Pauwels) made a brief intervention on its ratification procedures noting the normal duration is generally one year, but can be accelerated to 6 months for matters of political urgency. Russian Chief Arms Control Delegate Ulyanov (as expected) sent CFE expert Vadim Solomenko as the Russian representative again since Ulyanov was tied up with preparations for the Joint FSC-PC meetings on increased tensions between Russia and Georgia over Abkhazia. (Comment. The reason behind Ulyanov's now second absence was reported by Italy, and confirmed by Germany, in the JCG-T that met the day prior. End comment)

¶3. (SBU) Azerbaijan (Jafarova) kicked off a round of Azerbaijani-Armenia interventions stemming from last week's FSC intervention regarding France's inclusion, in its report of a VDoc inspection in Armenia, the Armenian charge that Azerbaijan's holdings exceed its CFE equipment ceilings. The JCG statement was directed only at Armenia and its failure to notify, let alone accept inspections of, over 40

Armenian units in Nagorno-Karabakh. Referring to the footnote in its annual data, Jafarova noted Azerbaijan,s full transparency with regard to 9 units along the line of conflict in contrast to Armenia's 'hiding' of over 40 units in the occupied territory. She then pointedly asked Armenia to provide any documentation regarding notifications or inspections of these units that would substantiate its claim that all units have been notified and are open to inspection.

¶4. (SBU) Rather than address the specific questions, Armenia (Hovhannisyan) repeated standard accusations, reiterated that Armenia was fulfilling all CFE obligations and questioned why Azerbaijan ever signed CFE and adapted CFE considering the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh predated the CFE Treaty. The end result was Azerbaijan and Armenia trying to top each other as to who was more out of compliance, with Azerbaijan asking rhetorically when it had ever given Armenia consent to deploy forces in the occupied territories.

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JCG-T Plus 4 - Russia's plans for JCG and latest Flank Proposal  
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¶5. (SBU) At the 14 January JCG-T plus 4, chaired by Turkey (Begec), Germany (Richter) presented a read out of the June 6-8 Pugwash Conference that had just met in Potsdam. Of note, Richter underscored there was a general understanding of the serious consequences that would stem from the loss of CFE and concern for a potential delay in resolving the impasse (alluding to the U.S. administration change) which would translate into no substantive progress for at least a full year. Richter noted Russia insists it has shown flexibility through a willingness to even discuss the Istanbul commitments and accept documentary transfer of Gudauta for which Georgia will not give permission. He alerted Allies that Russia would likely put forth concrete proposals in the JCG on the "secondary issues that have risen to the forefront," namely substantial combat forces, accession and ceilings, as Russia opines they are not satisfactorily addressed in the NAC statement.

¶6. (SBU) Regarding the Baluyevskiy flank-proposal, initially floated at a NATO-Russia Council CHOD meeting, Richter said he provided the Russians with the German unofficial reaction that the proposal ran counter to the very purpose of adapted CFE in terms of regional and sub-regional limits to prevent massing of forces. Turkey (Begec) noted it remains unconvinced that the Russian proposal would provide security assurances equal to the current Treaty. Both the U.S. (Neighbour) and Turkey concurred with the criticality of predictability and preventing sub-regional concentrations of forces. Neighbour also thanked the Germans for enabling the Pugwash conference to happen and emphasized that it was purely an academic brainstorming event during which all representatives from NATO countries closely adhered to HLTF guidance.

¶7. (SBU) There was minimal preparation required for the June 10 JCG meeting as no interventions were planned other than Belgium's brief statement on ratification procedures. Italy (Negro) reported, and Germany confirmed, that Ulyanov had indicated there would be no Russian statement and that he, himself, would not even be present as he was preoccupied with preparing for the meetings regarding Georgia.

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Small Group Meeting - Another Russian suspension?  
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¶8. (SBU) On June 12, the Treaty Operation and Implementation (TOI) Group Chairman (Fardellotti, Italy) convened the TOI small working group with the intention of clearing his nomination for the next TOI Chair (Linteau, Canada) before bringing the issue to the full TOI. Germany, Russia and the U.S. voiced support for the nomination. Citing a lack of progress in both the JCG and the U.S.-Russia

Bilateral channel, Russia (Solomenko) stated that it would likely soon put forward an official proposal to suspend the activity of the JCG Working Groups (TOI and POET). (Comment: Such a proposal would require - and not likely achieve - consensus in the JCG. End comment)

19. (U) The next JCG Plenary, to be chaired by Kazakhstan, will take place on June 17, followed by a TOI meeting, and will be preceded by a JCG-T on June 16.  
FINLEY